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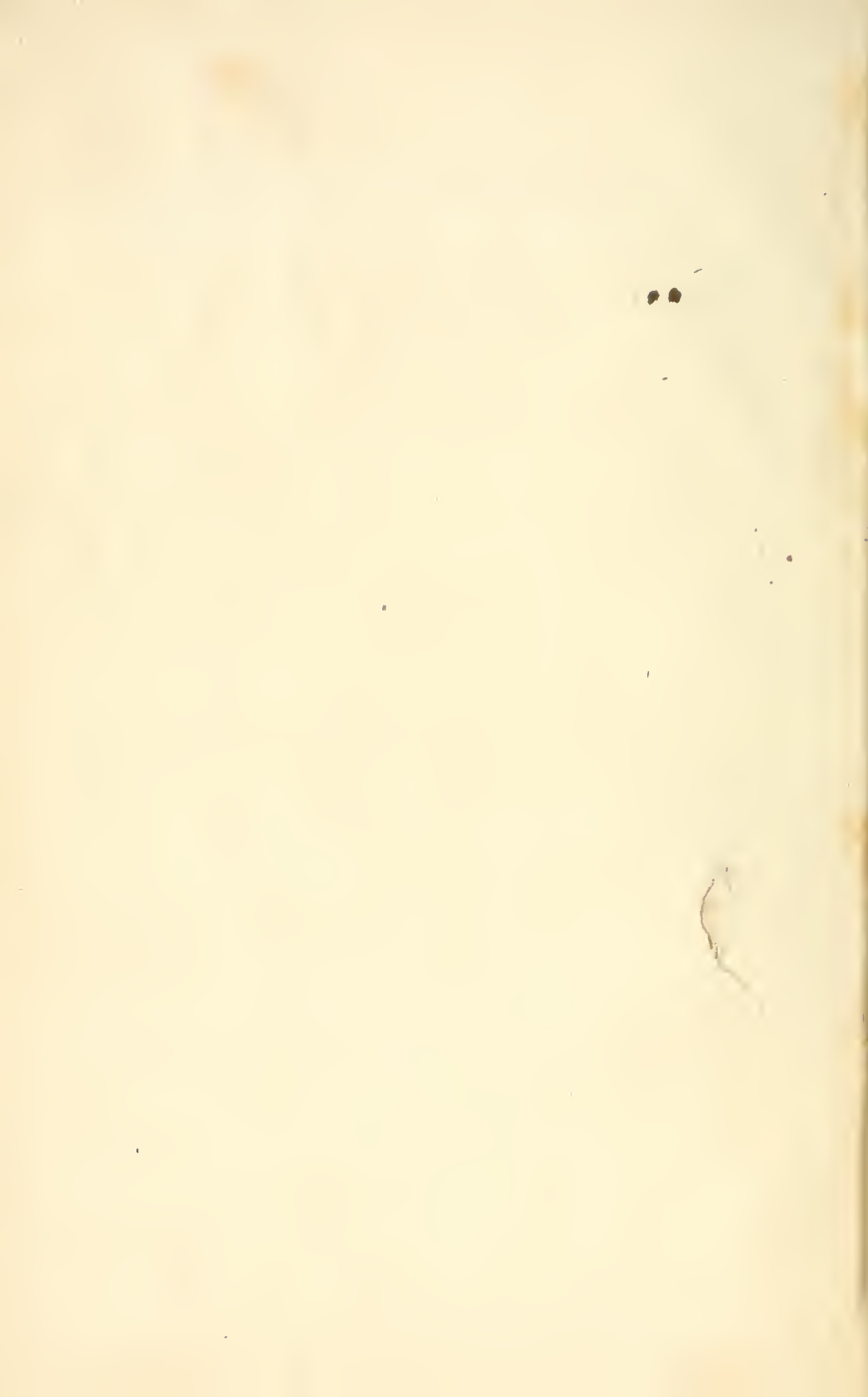
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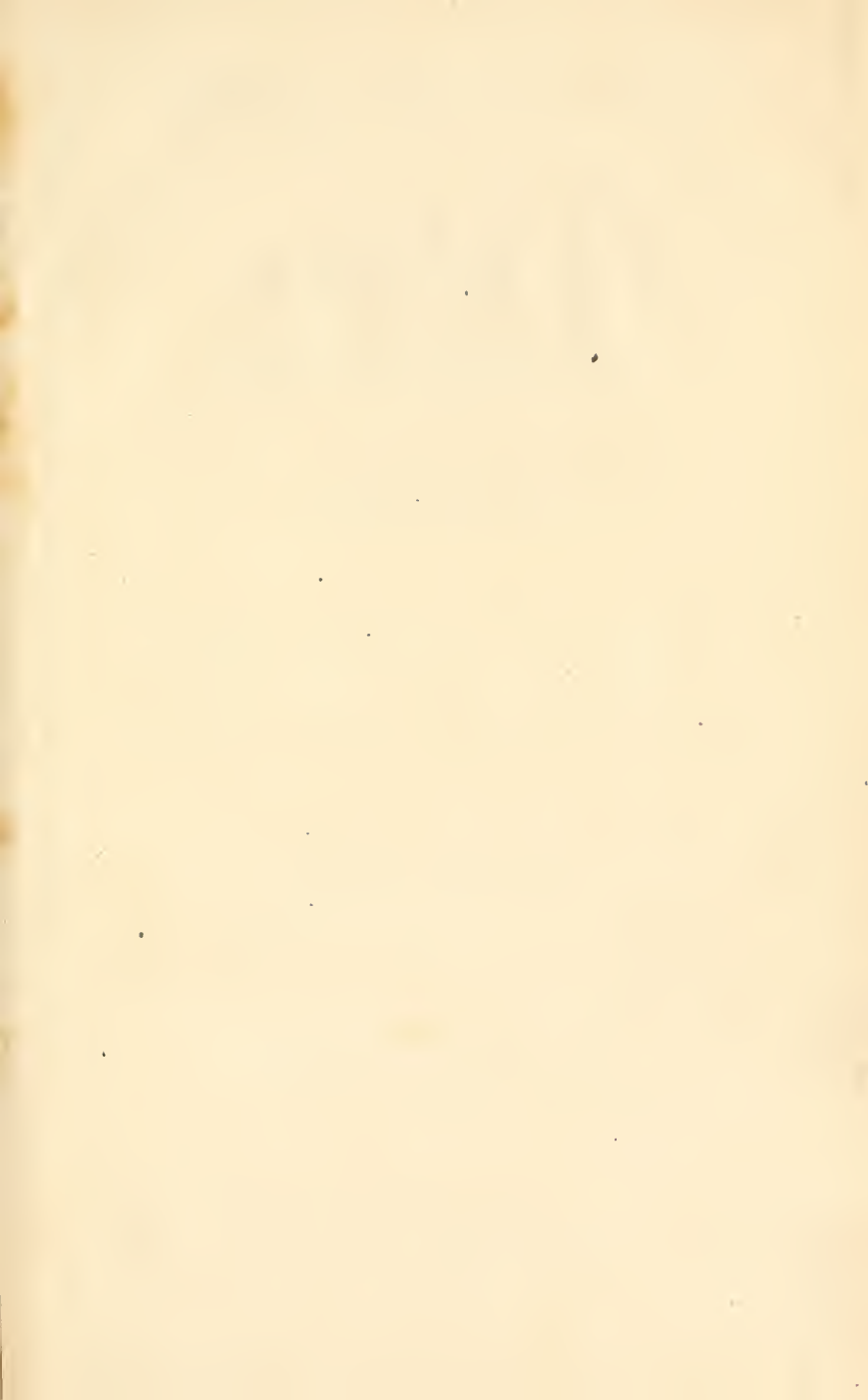


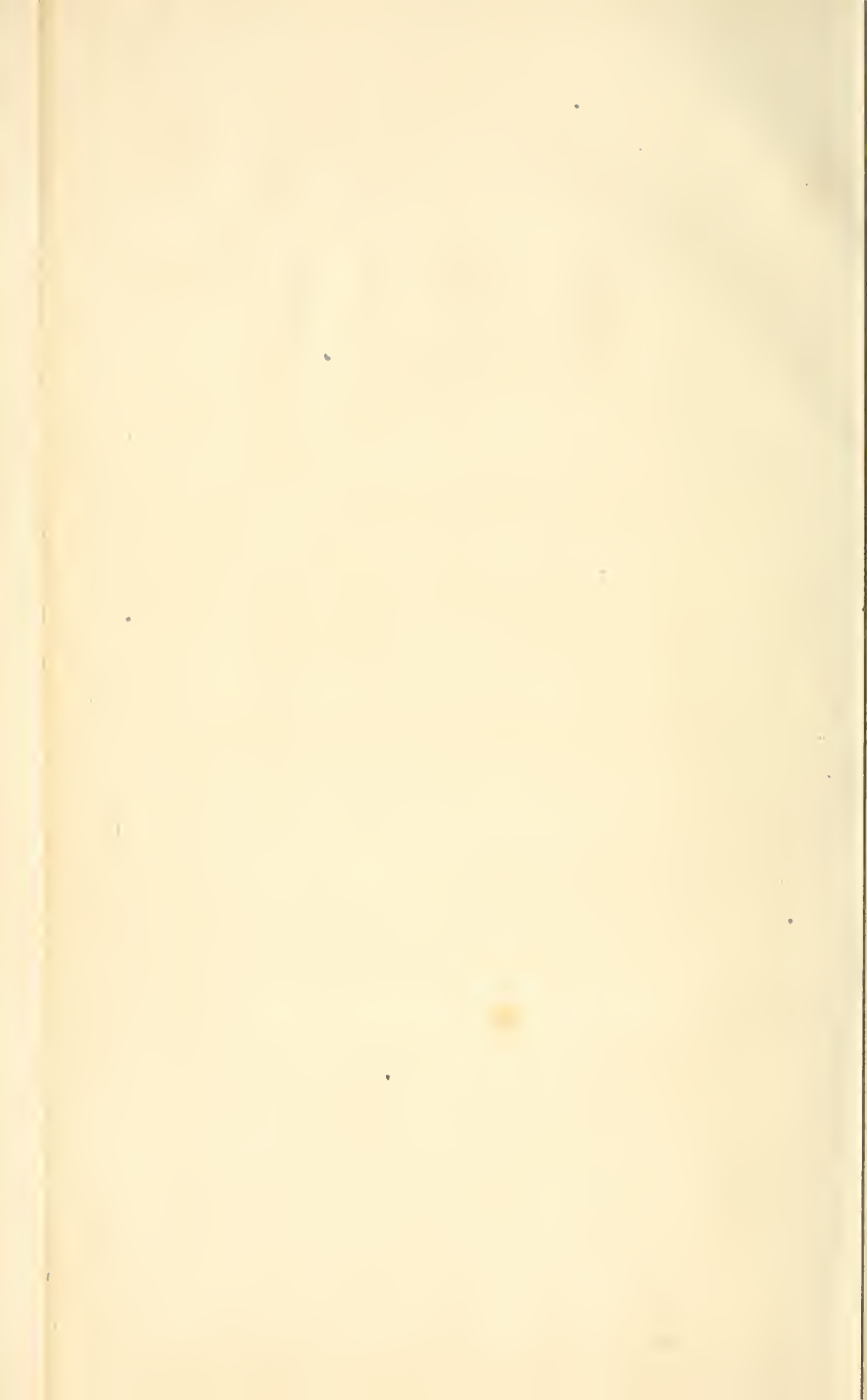
GIVEN BY

W. J. Floye.

April 12, 1892.







Fidelity in Christian Ministers.
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A

SERMON,

DELIVERED, NOVEMBER 22, 1809,

AT THE

ORDINATION

OF

REV. SAMUEL RIPLEY

TO THE CARE OF THE CHURCH AND CONGREGATION

IN

WALTHAM,

AND PUBLISHED BY THEIR REQUEST.

BY EZRA RIPLEY, A. M.
PASTOR OF THE CHURCH IN CONCORD.

BOSTON :
PRINTED BY JOHN ELIOT, JUN.

1809.

W. J. Foye

1268198

Apr. 11. 1892

S E R M O N .

REV. ii. 10.

Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

IT is sometimes requisite to illustrate the simplest commands, and to urge the plainest duties. All men of virtue acknowledge that fidelity is necessary in civil and religious transactions : what we want is to feel its importance. The practice of duty will follow just and impressive views of it.

A faithful spirit is an essential qualification for office : and what better commendation can we give a man, than to say, he is faithful in the discharge of it ? Fidelity extends its obligations to all classes of men ; and whoever is destitute of this assemblage of virtues, on him *Tekel* must be written. It directs great talents to the best ends, and renders small ones useful. It adds lustre to every other accomplishment, and by engaging the heart, and embracing the power of truth, reason, and religion, gives the finishing stroke to every duty, and perfects the character.

The inspired writers evidently considered fidelity as the glory of the best men : hence their repeated testimonies to the faithfulness of the most eminent characters in the Jewish and Christian church. St. Paul affirms concerning Jesus Christ and God himself, that they are faithful.* This superior excellence of character is enjoined in our text on christian ministers and churches, and they are encouraged to strive for the attainment of it by the promise of an infinite reward.

Obligations attach to stations and offices proportionate to the importance of them. The ministers of Christ hold an office highly interesting and responsible ; they are therefore under the greatest obligations to fidelity in the performance of their duty.

Our text was addressed to the angel, that is, the minister of the church in Smyrna, by Jesus Christ, the head of the church, who is styled “ the first and the last, which was dead and is alive.” *Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.*

The word *faithful*, when applied to men, has two general senses in the scriptures. One is believing divine testimony in opposition to unbelief : the other is uprightness, zeal, and courage in the discharge of incumbent duty in opposition to dishonesty, negligence, and cowardice. This latter appears to be the proper sense of the word in our text, with the addition of perseverance. The meaning may ex-

* 1 Cor. i. 9. Heb. ii. 17. iii. 2.

tend to the sacrificing of life in the cause of Christ, should exigencies require it.

By the crown of life is meant the reward of the faithful in heaven. This reward is evidently promised to animate pastors and churches in keeping the preceding charge.

I shall attempt to delineate the character of a faithful minister of Christ, consider the encouragement to fidelity, and apply the subject.

It is unnecessary to mention belief in the being and perfections of God, in divine revelation, and in the record which God has given of his Son. Faith in these doctrines is presupposed : for who would ever engage in preaching the christian religion, if he were an infidel ? Nor is it needful to dwell on ability to teach : this is taken for granted. Respectable talents, both natural and acquired, are necessary to the defence of the gospel, and the successful recommendation of our holy religion. The more knowledge and literature a clergyman possesses, being wise and faithful, the greater are his powers and his prospect of usefulness. The want of general information, especially in theological and classical learning, paralyses the exertions of ministers, and confines their usefulness to narrow limits.

But the christian minister, to be faithful, must possess a firm and operative belief in God, in Jesus Christ, and in the Bible ; a faith that realizes

spiritual things and produces cordial obedience to the gospel ; that purifies the heart, overcomes the world, and works by love to God and man. This faith represents God ever present, paints in lively colours before the mind the passion of Christ, continually impresses his precepts, prompts to an imitation of his example, and points to the words truth, grace, holiness, throughout the sacred volume. By such a faith, wavering and formality are excluded, the mind is impressed, the heart is warmed, and all the moral faculties are quickened. “ We also believe, and therefore speak,” said an apostle. Similar belief will awaken in him similar affections and efforts.

He must be attentive to maintain religion in his *own heart and life*. His personal interest in religion is not less, than that of his hearers. If he neglect his own vineyard, it is more than probable he is inattentive to that of his Lord. If he keep not his own heart with all diligence, it may be presumed he is careless of the souls of his flock. Perhaps, this is a criterion by which he may prove himself. The disposition and example of Christ should be so continually exhibited by him, that his life may be a series of virtuous instruction, and an impressive testimony to the truth and importance of the religion which he preaches. In imitation of St. Paul, he should be able, without the blush of guilt, to propose himself an example to his hearers.*

* Phil. iii. 17.

He must be *sincere in his intentions and desires* respecting his office and its duties. Sincerity is pleasing to God, who looks on the heart; but hypocrisy is abomination in his sight. Being unfeigned in his disposition, his united powers will be engaged to accomplish the benevolent purposes of his ministry, to the exclusion of sinister views and inordinate attachment to worldly gain. The goodness of his employment will occupy his attention more, than its emolument. In this frame of mind, professional duties will be preferred to secular business, and even to innocent pleasures, should they come in competition.

He must give himself to *reading, meditation, prayer, and the writing of sermons*. On these subjects he should order his affairs with discretion. Method and profit are closely connected. In the writings of the learned and pious are treasures of knowledge; but the sacred volume especially should be consulted. Ignorance of the Bible, of its general design, principal doctrines, connexion, and the evidences of its divine origin and character, in him is inexcusable.

He should meditate both for the purposes of devotion and the investigation of truth, and acquire a habit of mental communion with God. The clergyman, who communes not with his God unseen by the world, who thinks not for himself, and who neglects to examine and prove doctrines and opinions, is not a little in fault.

He should be eminently a man of prayer. His should be “the effectual fervent prayer of the righteous which availeth much.” The happy effect of devotion on himself will be productive of benefit to all around him.

These exercises very properly precede and accompany preparation for the pulpit. Whatever talents he may possess, and how powerful soever his eloquence, let no confidence in himself embolden him to neglect the writing of sermons.

He must preach the word of God without *corrupting* it. The word may be corrupted by adding to it the opinions of men, by lessening its obligations, and by misrepresenting its genuine spirit. On all hands it is agreed, that the scriptures are a perfect rule of faith and practice, and “are able to make wise unto salvation through faith in Christ.” But it is difficult, if not impossible, for christians to unite in the precise meaning of some passages of the holy writings.

I might express the articles of my faith ; but my belief, in reason and conscience, can be no farther binding on a brother, than he is convinced of its agreement with the word of God ; that being a perfect standard for both, each one is at liberty, and ought to search and understand for himself, in the diligent use of the best helps in his power.

A variety of religious opinions have obtained in the world. Great and good men differ in sentiments

on some points in theology. But who is qualified or authorized to decide between them? We are directed, by undisputed authority, neither to give nor accept the appellation of rabbi, or master; and this injunction is inconsistent with regulating our faith by the opinions of others. Far be it from me to impose religious creeds on my brethren; or to be indifferent about the one I admit for myself. Let every man be persuaded in his own mind; and let me never deny to others the precious privilege, liberty of conscience, which I would not myself surrender. But let me embrace in the arms of my charity all persons, who so believe the Bible as to fear God and keep his commandments, and who so believe in Jesus Christ as to obey his precepts, and exhibit his moral likeness. A great deal has been said concerning essential doctrines in religion. That there are such doctrines is readily granted; nor would I insinuate any thing to the contrary. But some of the points, which are esteemed essential by one, may not be so estimated by another. I would therefore maintain, that one christian has no right to impose his list of essentials on another, and to withhold charity from him, if he refuse in part that list; and especially if the part rejected be disputed among enlightened christians. By essential must be meant something without which we cannot be morally renovated and finally admitted to heaven. It is, doubtless, essential to us, who are blest with the gospel, that we believe in Jesus Christ, in his medi-

atorial character, and that we believe unto practical righteousness and redemption from iniquity. But can it be essential that we entertain precisely the same ideas of Christ, and of the manner in which his benefits are derived to us? We must be born again. There can be no doubt whether the change here intended be essential to admission into the kingdom of God. But will any man pretend, that it is also essential for us to imbibe exactly the same notions of the mode of the Spirit's operation in effecting regeneration? It is essential, as all christians, I presume, will agree, that a man regulate his thoughts and practice according to his belief of the truth; otherwise he would not be honest before God, and therefore not a good man. But it is, perhaps, in the nature of things, as impossible for men to think alike, as to wear the same countenance. All men must have generally the same leading features; those features being essential to a proper human face: but there is an infinite variety of physiognomy. It may be the will of God, that there should be the same necessity for moral as natural variety, and that vast benefit should thence result to mankind. Unity with variety strongly marks the works of God. Is it not, then, uncharitable in us, to censure those as unchristian, who cannot admit into their creed all that we deem essential, when they are not inferior to us in advantages and inducements for knowing the scriptures, and following their light?

But however christians may differ in defining essentials, we must all agree in this, that charity is essential ; for without charity we are nothing.

It is not a little wonderful that, at the present day, a disposition appears, to overlook the opinions of the fathers, who succeeded the apostles, and the discoveries of modern times, and to fix on the sentiments of the first reformers from the midnight darkness which had long enveloped the church. Those reformers were illustrious characters : but is it reasonable to suppose, that Luther, Melancthon, and Calvin were able at once clearly to distinguish truth from error in all points ? They accomplished great things : but is it not obvious they could only begin the reformation and the development of truth, which had been long concealed or perverted ? To suppose that they completed the whole work of reformation from error and abuse in christianity, and left nothing for successors, might be thought almost as absurd, as to suppose, there could be no improvement made in the art of printing, the mariner's compass, or the mechanism of a clock, after the first invention.

Nothing short of inspiration can entitle Luther, Calvin, or any other man, to implicit confidence in his opinions ; and if men, at this day, are equally learned and pious as they were, and are favoured with equal advantages for acquiring knowledge, their opinions are entitled to the same degree of re-

spect and confidence. Shall we disregard the researches and elucidations of nearly three centuries, and prefer opinions just emerging from an ocean of error? There is one consideration that must forever be a powerful argument in favour of the acquisitions of modern divines, viz. they have sought for truth, unfettered by bigotry, and unawed by civil and ecclesiastical tyranny.

In the preceding observations are implied reasons of weight in my mind for not specifying doctrines which to me are essential. I shall therefore only say in general, that a christian minister must preach "Christ and him crucified." This is the only foundation on which rests both his office and the hope of salvation. "Other foundation can no man lay;" and it would be highly inconsistent and criminal in him, to teach piety, morality, and religion, as a civil officer, separate from the peculiar doctrines and duties of the gospel. He must search the scriptures for the truth as it is in Jesus, and invariably preach it in exclusion of human systems and servile dependence on the sentiments of fallible men.

He must be *diligent*. His work is great and various. Demands for exertion are constant and pressing;—the time is short;—life is precarious;—opportunities swiftly pass away;—and the final judgment is rapidly approaching! Surely he ought to redeem the time, and to study, as one observes, "unto painfulness and labour unto fatigue." Dili-

gence will enable him to increase in knowledge and excel in his profession ; but indolence will be a blot on his character and a blast on his labours.

He should be *acquainted with the state of his flock*. In this case, he will be able to administer to every one his portion, as his character and capacity may require, and to apply seasonable remedies to existing evils. But ignorant of the wants of his flock, they may be ill fed, scattered, and lost.

He must be *impartial*. Jesus Christ is not a respecter of persons ; and he is the pattern for his ministers. The spiritual interests of the poor are as precious, as those of the rich. Christianity is as necessary in the parlours of wealth, as in the cottages of poverty. He will therefore be attentive to people of every condition, and act under the influence of that wisdom, “which is without partiality.”

He must be *affectionate*. It is the command of Christ, that we love one another as he hath loved us. Affection like this will rejoice the hearts of his people, and alleviate his own burdens. What tender solicitude we feel for those whom we cordially love ! and what hardships we cheerfully endure for their benefit ! Not otherwise the affectionate minister labours and suffers for the comfort and salvation of his charge.

He must be *zealous for the truth and its success*. No fit opportunity to vindicate the truth and con-

vince unbelievers should be neglected. But his zeal should always be tempered by knowledge and regulated by wisdom and prudence.

He must be *patient*. “The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing them that oppose themselves.” Opposition may be expected; but let him possess his soul in patience.

He must be *courageous*. The pastor and church at Smyrna were advertised of approaching tribulation, and exhorted to “fear none of those things, which they should suffer.” In the christian warfare courage and fortitude are requisite; and in these virtues the pastor should be a pattern for his flock. There is a heroism in religion, which he should carefully cultivate, would he encounter difficulties with success, and meet dangers without dismay. He may never be exposed to the stake or the scaffold, but he should be at least a martyr in resolution.

He must be *prudent*. Very much is implied in this word. A treatise might be pertinently written on it; but a paragraph must suffice. Prudence appertains both to the head and the heart. It means ordering one’s affairs wisely, and acting at all times with discretion. “The prudent man looketh well to his going.” If this maxim of the wise man were constantly reduced to practice, the benefit would be above estimation; but imprudence attaches to it evils beyond calculation.

I am now to consider the encouragement to fidelity. "I will give thee a crown of life." Distinguished honours are meant by a crown, when seriously given. A crown of life gives the ideas of superior honour and enjoyment without end. In the phrase there is, most probably, an allusion to the crown of sovereign princes, expressive of their authority ; or to the crown of garlands frequently given to conquerors in battles and games. Those crowns were fading and perishable ; but that promised in the text is a crown of life which cannot fade. By the expression we are to understand the glories and joys of heaven. This ineffable blessedness is promised to all the faithful ministers and followers of Christ.

I will not take your time, my hearers, by attempting a particular description of the felicity of heaven. By giving scope to your imagination, you may form correct, though faint, ideas of it. You may feel the force and anticipate the happiness of that final plaudit, "Well done, good and faithful servants, enter ye into the joys of your Lord." I will close this head in the words of Archbishop Tillotson, vol. x. serm. 184, p. 40. "That which is imperfect must be done away ; our souls must be raised to a greater perfection, and our understanding filled with a stronger and steadier light, before we can be fit to handle such a subject, according to the worth and dignity of it. We must first have been in heaven, and possessed of the felicity and glory which is there

to be enjoyed, before we can think or talk of it, in any measure as it deserves.”

My brethren in the ministry will give me leave to say, *we* are deeply interested in the subject of discourse. The dispensation of the gospel is committed to us, and nothing can excuse unfaithfulness. How responsible and momentous our office ! Can we be idle and slothful servants ? The command to be faithful is peremptory, and the encouragement infinite ! A just view of our office is enough to awaken our whole attention, and arouse all our energies. On this subject let me adduce a few lines from the celebrated Massillon. “He, who observes, without concern, the irregularities of his flock ; who is content with not giving his approbation to the vices he perceives ; who does not lament the loss of the souls entrusted to him :—a pastor of this character is dead to the high sense of his calling. Zeal for the salvation of men, is, then, the first duty of a christian minister : this is the principle which should inspire him with resolution, and supply him with comfort, in the discharge of the most laborious duties ; which should be, as it were, the soul, and the chief consolation, of his ministry.”

The manner, as well, as the matter of our duty, should be regarded. Prudence should guard us against “giving offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed.” To comply with the sense of this passage, we ought to be united in the great

design of our office, and to cherish those dispositions, which correspond with our sacred relation to each other. Charity and candour should be conspicuous traits in our character. We may not be united in all the articles of our faith ; but we may be, nevertheless, in christian charity.

Is it desirable, brethren, that christians should be entirely uniform in religious sentiments ? Would it be propitious to the cause of truth and religion ? We find that the greatest uniformity in religious opinions, that has been known since the establishment of christianity, existed under the papal hierarchy ; when free investigation was deemed heretical, and independent inquirers after truth were excommunicated, exiled, or put to death. And it is worthy of remark, that, during that period of ecclesiastical domination, arose the proudest corruptions and vilest absurdities that ever deformed christianity and polluted the church. And should similar uniformity become prevalent even in this enlightened country, would not similar consequences follow ? Like causes will produce like effects so long as the nature of men and things shall continue unchanged. Difference in opinion is proper occasion for christian charity. Besides, collision of sentiments, under the influence of candour, strengthens the mental powers and elicits truth, as the smitten flint emits fire. Were christians perfectly agreed, would not a mental torpor ensue and give birth to errors, as stagnant waters become putrid ?

It merits our attention, that in all the accounts, which our Lord has given of the final judgment, not a word is to be found on particular articles of faith or sects in religion ; but the whole stress is laid on the *fruits* of faith and love. Here is implied an irresistible argument in favour of a catholic and charitable spirit, and against bigotry and censoriousness. Brethren, let us be kind and candid one towards another, and faithful to our trust. “ Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing.”

My dear son, you perceive the application of my discourse to yourself. You are soon to make the vows and receive the charge of a christian minister. The charge and promise in the text are to you. To obey the injunction is your indispensable duty ; and, then, to realize the promise will be your certain recompense. If the obligation and encouragement can receive additional weight in your mind from parental affection, that addition is now made. It would occasion needless trouble to this assembly, were I to express the fervency of my desires, that you may be faithful and successful in the ministry. I am not anxious about the reward ; it is graciously attached to fidelity.

A parent will notice with pious sensibility many occurrences relative to his children, which to others are of no importance. From your earliest infancy you were dedicated to the altar. Divine influence, I

trust, has inclined your heart ; divine providence has favoured our prayers ; and God is this day accepting our vows and devotions. O, remember your vows, and pay them ; consider your profession and adorn it ; appreciate your office and render it a blessing.

Trials you may expect to meet. The cross must not only be worn, as a badge, but borne, as the daily task of a christian. But “ God will be with you, while you are with him.” “ He cannot want honour and patronage, who seeks the honour of his Maker,” says bishop Hall.

Search the scriptures with diligence and prayer. From this fountain furnish yourself and feed your flock. “ Be circumspect, my son, in all things that thou doest, and be wise in all thy conversation.”* “ Whatsoever thou takest in hand, remember the end, and thou shalt never do amiss.”† In prudence, as in other virtues, you have an excellent example in the life of your late worthy predecessor, Dr. Cushing. The good order and harmony, which have long subsisted in this place, evince his superiority in some distinguishing traits of the sacerdotal character. You will be attentive to his bereaved widow and family. By the world in general, when kindness is most needed, it is often cruelly withheld. A family deprived at once of their head and ordinary means of support, should never be neglected. The benevo-

* Tobit iv. 11.

† Eccl. vi. 6.

lence of some societies and individuals to the widows and orphans of ministers is highly commendable, and worthy to be had in everlasting remembrance. May such examples be every where imitated.

Other than parochial duties will devolve on you. Occasions like the present may call you to aid in the induction of others to the gospel ministry. Let integrity and candour mark your conduct. But fidelity does not require, that in the exercise of your right to examine and ordain others, you should refuse approbation and imposition of hands to all those, whose religious creed differs from your own. Whilst you adhere inflexibly to the Bible, as you ought, you are not to suppose yourself infallible ; nor that your brother, who believes differently from you, is less engaged to understand and practise the truth, than yourself. Strenuous endeavours to bring christians precisely to one measure tend directly to produce hypocrisy and prevarication, or alienation and schism ; and if persisted in by the clergy, will eventually press the churches to the alternative of ordaining their own pastors themselves, or of receiving teachers not of their own election. The want of candour and liberty of conscience will forever be attended with pernicious effects, not only to individuals and churches, but to the cause of christianity.

“ There is a mean in things, its bounds are sure ;
Nor truth nor justice can extremes endure.”

And now, my son, “ I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you

up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.”

The message, on which we have been meditating, applies to this church and religious society. It was directed to the minister, and through him to the church. As christians, you are commanded to be faithful : and on the ground of compliance only can you apply to yourselves the promise of reward.

Brethren, let the interesting solemnities of this day impress every mind, touch every heart, and give permanence to the most virtuous resolutions. Let me congratulate you on this occasion, and rejoice with you in your prospects. May “the good will of him who dwelt in the bush” render this day auspicious to you and your children.

Circumstances add weight to instruction. The present solemnities may therefore make deeper impressions ; for this day is the anniversary of the ordination of your late revered pastor. Fifty-seven years have elapsed since your fathers received an ascension gift of our Lord, and united with him in the vows and tears of consecration. In that period, what changes have been witnessed ! But instead of the fathers are the children. You are now actors in a scene of the same kind and importance. And is it not matter of gratitude, that within a year, and with so much unanimity, you are repairing your loss ? But neither yourselves, nor your young pastor, ought to calculate on such a long continuance of the union

now to be consummated. “Our fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live for ever?” Take heed, brethren, how you remember, and how you hear. The obligations of minister and people are reciprocal. He must watch for your souls, and you must hear the word at his mouth, with a fixed eye to final account and infinite consequences.

You will not only attend on his ministrations, but pray for him. This devotional exercise will cement your mutual affection, cheer his heart, and prepare yourselves to receive the truth. Your reasonable endeavours to preserve peace and order God beholds with approbation, and will amply reward. But the Lord abhors the contentious and deceitful man, and “him that soweth discord among brethren.”

Suffer no practice among you, which tends to bring scandal on the church or on the christian name. It will be admitted, I believe, in every part of christendom, that the vices of the professed friends of christianity have more effectually injured its cause and impeded its progress, than all the opposition of avowed infidels. Far be it from you to give occasion for reproach to the religion of Christ. May you be faithful christians and wear forever the crown of life!

This assembly is requested to apply the truths exhibited. By serious meditation impress them on your minds, and ask that divine blessing, which will render them subservient to your best interests for ever. Fidelity is required of every person; and the

promise is only to the faithful. Is this your character? Are you prepared to render an account of yourselves?

The christian ministry was instituted with a peculiar design of promoting the spiritual comfort and salvation of men. And will any of you, my respected hearers, frustrate this gracious design by your unbelief and impenitence? The true light is come into the world and illumines the path to heaven. Will any one prefer darkness to light? The ministers of Christ affectionately seek your highest felicity. And will you refuse to hear, when “we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God?” O hear, and your souls shall live.—Then, unto you will be pronounced, before the assembled world, these transporting words, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”

AMEN.



THE
CHARGE,

BY

REV. DR. OSGOOD, OF MEDFORD.

DEAR SIR,

HAVING at the request of this church and congregation and with the approbation of the venerable council now convened, consented to take upon yourself the obligations and duties of the gospel ministry in this place, you have now, by prayer and the laying on of the hands of the presbytery, been separated and ordained to that sacred office: To you are solemnly committed the pastoral care and oversight in the Lord of this church and people; and we declare you authorized, equally with ourselves, to preach the gospel, administer its ordinances, preside in the house of God, exercise the discipline of his church, bless the congregation in his name, and assist in the ordination of others.

Being thus introduced a fellow-labourer with ourselves in the vineyard of our Lord, you will permit us to remind you of and apply to you the solemn charge which our common Master has addressed to all who are thus employed in his service.

Before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, the elect angels and this christian assembly, you are charged to take heed to yourself and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you an overseer, that you feed them with knowledge and understanding, declaring to them all the revealed counsel of God, keeping back nothing that may be profitable, being instant and watchful in embracing every suitable season to reprove, rebuke and exhort, as there may be occasion.

In order to your being suitably furnished for these duties, it is required of you that, by persevering diligence in reading, meditation and prayer you become a scribe well instructed in the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, mighty in the scriptures, and skilful in rightly dividing the word of truth.

You are strictly cautioned against entangling yourself in the affairs of this life, or suffering your mind to be cumbered with worldly concerns. You must give yourself wholly if possible, to the service of Christ and his church, availing yourself of all the advantages within your reach, and exerting your utmost abilities to shew yourself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, doing thoroughly the work of an evangelist and making full proof of your ministry.

Having imbibed the spirit of the gospel and feeling upon your own heart its truth and importance,

your great concern and study must be to preach it with such clearness and perspicuity, and with such persuasive force and energy as, if possible, to impress a similar sense of it on the minds of your hearers.

You must also feel it to be incumbent upon you to take pains, that your prayers in the public assembly, in the chambers of sickness, in the houses of mourning and on all other occasions, be solemn, scriptural, pertinent, sincere, fervent and edifying to those whose mouth you may be in presenting their addresses to the throne of grace.

Neither in your visits among your people, nor in any part of your social intercourse, may you ever forget your Master's business ; but, from house to house be constantly watching for opportunities to promote it by taking heed that your lips preserve knowledge, and that your speech may drop as the dew in exhortation, reproof and encouragement, according to the character and circumstances of those who may be present.

Nor is it enough that you plainly and faithfully teach the doctrines and duties of the gospel ; you must recommend them by your daily practice, and set your hearers an example of that faith and obedience which you inculcate upon them. To the character of every sincere christian it is essential that his conversation be blameless ; but still greater circumspection, purity and devotion are justly ex-

pected in the character of a christian minister. He must be an example to the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity, in whatsoever is virtuous and praise worthy.

In the observance of these things, my young brother, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ : In your sincere endeavours to observe them, accompanied with humble, fervent supplication for aid from above, divine grace will prove sufficient for thee.

Whatever your success may be (God grant it may be great and eminent, that many, *many*, through your means, may take hold on eternal life !) yet, should Israel not be gathered, your labour will not be in vain : Clear of the blood of all men, you will save your own soul, and be ultimately received with a well done, good and faithful servant.

AMEN.

THE
RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP,

BY
REV. MR. EMERSON, OF BOSTON.

THE ceremony of giving the Right Hand of Fellowship is, I believe, peculiar to the religious customs of our own country. It lays claim, however, to apostolick origin, and, on occasions like the present, has a pertinent significancy.

Receive this hand, then, my dear brother, as a testimony of approbation to the solemnities of this day. Consider the ministers and churches, here convened, as saying to you by me, We acknowledge you a minister of Jesus Christ. We are so far satisfied with your natural abilities, the means of education you have enjoyed, the literary and theological attainments you have made, and with the aspect of your religious temper and moral habits, as that we are willing to give our concurrent voice to the election of this church.

It is also a token of congratulation. We rejoice that you are willing to assume the studies and labours of a difficult, but important profession; and are happy that Providence has cast your lot in your

native state, in the bosom of a society which promises you a life of competence and peace, in the neighbourhood of your friends, of an ancient and respectable university, and of a flourishing metropolis.

It is a mark of affection. It purports a union of hearts as well as of designs. Henceforth, look upon the ministers of Christ in this house as your friends, pledged to be careful of your reputation, to counsel you in difficulties, assist you in your labours, and to pray for your personal and professional improvement. I thank them for making me the organ of their benevolent sentiments. I feel that the sympathies of friendship, as well as of natural affection, in some measure qualify me for the office.

It is, lastly, a sign of valediction. Farewel, my brother ; be serious in your designs, and God make them prosperous ! Be strong in faith and eminent in charity. We leave you with our best wishes, and our most sincere and fervent prayers. We shall think often and tenderly of you, when the agitations of this day shall have subsided. In the various scenes and duties opening before you, show yourself a man and a christian ; and by a pure and elevated piety, a zeal united with moderation, a tolerant and pacifick conduct, and by a reciprocation of the kind offices, which we have tendered to you, testify to us, and to all whom you teach and with whom

you mix, that you are actuated by the spirit, that you breathe the benevolence, that you imitate the example of Jesus your Master.

For do not mistake the meaning of this sign. We can supply none of your defects, nor may we sanction any of your errors. We have no apostolick gifts at our disposal. You are the same frail, fallible being now, as you were before the imposition of our hands. You have the same appetites to regulate, and the same temptations to resist. As by the solemnities of ordination we convey to you no extraordinary powers, so by the exchange of hands we can perpetuate no friendship, which is not supported by virtue. If, therefore, you would give permanence to the union this day formed between you and your flock, and between you and your fathers and brethren in the ministry, make it lasting by a righteous, honourable, and vigourous course of action. The way to prove the validity of your consecration is to render your ministry useful. Use well your opportunities, and God Almighty will bless you. Cultivate your talents, and they will be serviceable to the church. Be faithful unto death, and you will receive at last a crown of life.

Brethren of this church and congregation. Accept our salutations on this solemn and interesting occasion. We remember with pleasure your late instructor and guide, venerable for his years, prudence, and fidelity. Like his may the ministry of

your present pastor be long, tranquil, and salutary. And having become wise, through the blessing of God on his labours, may you hereafter shine as the firmament, and he, having turned many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever !

AMEN.



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